

State of Alaska  
Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development  
Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing

Alaska State Board of Social Work Examiners  
November 12, 2020

*These are drafted minutes prepared by staff of the Alaska State  
Board of Social Work Examiners  
They have not been reviewed or approved by the Board.*

By Authority of AS 08.01.070(2) and in compliance with the provisions of AS 44.62, a regularly scheduled meeting of the Alaska State Board of Social Work Examiners was held November 12, 2020. The meeting was held via teleconference originating at Juneau.

November 12, 2020

Agenda item #1 Call to order/Roll Call

Call to order was not recorded

Board Members present, constituting a quorum:

Mindy Swisher, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Board Chairperson  
Geoffry McCormick, Licensed Master Social Worker  
Colleen Vague, Public Member  
Brandon Ercanbrack, Licensed Clinical Social Worker

Division Staff present were:

Sara Chambers, Division Director  
Lacey Derr, Records and Licensing Supervisor  
Jun Maiquis, Regulation Specialist  
Harriet Milks, Attorney  
Lauren Bales, Occupational Licensing Examiner

Agenda Item #1 Review Agenda

Chairperson, Mindy Swisher noted that Danielle LaFon should be removed from the board members listed at the top of the agenda.

*A motion duly made by Geoffry McCormick, seconded by Colleen Vague, and approved by unanimous consent, was:*

*Resolved to approve the agenda as amended.*

*Attorney, Harriet Milks joined the meeting at 5:10pm.*

Agenda item #1 Ethics Reporting

There were no ethics conflicts to report.

Agenda item #2 COVID-19 Status Report

As COVID-19 cases are on the rise in Alaska, the urgent need for more health care providers is clear. Division Director Sara Chambers opened the meeting discussion by presenting a letter from DHSS Commissioner Crum calling on the division to enact emergency regulations and/or long-term regulatory solutions to combat the direct necessity for more health care providers in Alaska. With the ending of SB241, the emergency courtesy licensees

previously offered by the Alaska Board of Social Work Examiners would become null and void after November 15, 2020. Director Chambers asked the board to evaluate the need for a declaration of emergency, review and discuss the regulation language presented for Emergency Courtesy Licenses, and adopt the language if the need was agreed upon.

Unanimously, the board agreed the COVID-19 mental health emergency was still significant.

### Agenda item #3                      Proposed Solutions

Discussion was had regarding which license type should qualify for the Social Worker Emergency Courtesy License. It was decided that Clinical Social Workers should be the only Social Worker qualifying for the Emergency Courtesy License to ensure the highest standard of care is provided.

It was decided by the board that a 90-day maximum with the opportunity to renew would be the preferred timeframe for the Emergency Courtesy License. The renewal would need to be approved by the board if it was found that the emergency under which the courtesy license was issued was still in effect.

### Agenda item #4                      Adoption of Emergency Regulations

#### Proposal of Standard Regulations

*A motion duly made by Geoffry McCormick, seconded by Colleen Vague, and approved by unanimous consent, was:*

***Resolved to declare an emergent necessity requiring additional social workers to be licensed quickly, to adopt 12 AAC 18.111 as amended to read "...may not exceed 90 days. An emergency courtesy license may be renewed for one additional period specified by the board, not to exceed 90 days" as emergency regulations and to be public noticed as permanent regulations.***

The board requested that the public notice be sent out to all who currently hold the Emergency Courtesy License type.

*Attorney, Harriet Milks, and Regulation Specialist Jun Maquis, left the meeting at 6:14pm.*

### Agenda item #5                      Renewal Discussion

Earlier this year the board made it a requirement for all licensees to obtain three teletherapy Continuing Education hours that would be effective for the renewal period ending on October 30, 2020. This was not subsequently public noticed. Many questions have been received from Social Workers that were unaware that this new requirement pertained to them. During the renewal period, this new regulatory update was also not included on the renewal forms. Social Workers were then able to renew in good faith even if the teletherapy hours were not obtained.

During the upcoming audit it is likely that many will not have completed the teletherapy Continuing Education hours. This requirement cannot be waived since it is in regulation, however, the Division recommends that the board reach out to the licensees that have not yet taken these hours and ask them to receive the 3 required teletherapy Continuing Education hours rather than penalize them. The forms will also be corrected to show the teletherapy requirement for the future.

Agenda item #6      Meeting Adjourned

**Adjourned at 6:25 PM**

Respectfully Submitted By:

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Stefanie L. Davis  
Occupational License Examiner  
State of Alaska, DCCED, CBPL

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Date

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Mindy Swisher  
Board Chairperson  
Alaska State Board of Social Work Examiners

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Date